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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/973,675	10/09/2001	Christian M. Heesch	A01153US	5770

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EXAMINER

ACKUN, JACOB K

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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3712

DATE MAILED: 07/17/2003

6

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Applicati n No.

09/973,675

Applicant(s)

HEESCH, CHRISTIAN M.

Examiner

Jacob K. Ackun Jr.

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☐ Responsive to communication(s) filed on ____.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) ____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-24 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) ____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) ____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on ____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on ____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. ____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s). ____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) <u>5</u> . | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: |

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1. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

2. Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention. The claims are replete with indefinite language of the type noted below and should be carefully reviewed and corrected as appropriate, even though the defect is not pointed out wherever it occurs. Several elements either lack proper antecedent basis or lack antecedent basis altogether. For example, claim 1 is indefinite because the phrases “the lateral exterior surface” and “the central portion of the back” on lines 5 and 7 respectively lack antecedent bases. Secondly, in several instances the claims are indefinite because it is not clear whether they are drawn to the protective case or to the combination of the protective case and a stringed instrument therein. This in turn is because the claimed protective case appears to be further structurally limited by reference to some stringed instrument, when no stringed instrument appears to be positively recited or claimed. For example, line 1 of claim 2 recites “a protective case for a stringed instrument”. Accordingly it is presumed that what is claimed is the subcombination of the protective case, not the combination of the case and any stringed instrument. On the other hand, lines 4 and 5 of claim 2 require the top part to have an area overlying a stringed instrument that is stored in the base part. Note also the requirement in lines 5 and 6 of the same claim, wherein the soft material is positioned with respect to enumerated parts of the stringed instrument. Note also the same defect in line 8 of independent claim 3 and in line 10 of independent claim 9, for example only.

In this office action the claims are interpreted as NOT claiming a stringed instrument or any part thereof. Therefore, all references in the claims to a stringed instrument or to any parts thereof are considered only to be statements of intended use with respect to the claimed case. However, clarification of the scope of all of the claims is required. Moreover, keeping in mind that it is by now well settled that features not claimed may not be relied upon in support of patentability, the combination should be claimed in the event any part of the instrument is intended to be further structurally limiting with respect to the claimed case.

Additionally claims such as claim 7 are indefinite because they appear to depend from two claims. Also the protective means referred to in the recitation with regard to claim 6 is not clear, as claim 6 does not recite a protective means.

3. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(a) the invention was known or used by others in this country, or patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country, before the invention thereof by the applicant for a patent.

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

(e) the invention was described in a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent, or on an international application by another who has fulfilled the requirements of paragraphs (1), (2), and (4) of section 371(c) of this title before the invention thereof by the applicant for patent.

The changes made to 35 U.S.C. 102(e) by the American Inventors Protection Act of 1999 (AIPA) and the Intellectual Property and High Technology Technical Amendments Act of 2002 do not apply when the reference is a U.S. patent resulting directly or indirectly from an international application filed before November 29, 2000. Therefore, the prior art date of the

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reference is determined under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) prior to the amendment by the AIPA (pre-AIPA 35 U.S.C. 102(e)).

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1-24 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a, b, or e) as anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as obvious over Flynn (6,029,804 cited by the applicant), or Walther (4,846,340), or Kovins (4,215,778), or Katz (3,326,359). The claims are interpreted as best understood. All of the claims require a protective case having soft padding or cushioning to protect a stringed instrument. All of the applied references disclose this structure. Since the cases of the applied references have all of the structural elements of the claims, they are presumed to be inherently capable of all of the claimed functions such as the statements of intended use noted above.

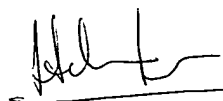
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Jacob K. Ackun Jr. whose telephone number is (703)308-3867. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday 8.30AM-5.00PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Derris Banks can be reached on (703)308-1745. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are (703)305-3579 for regular

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communications and (703)305-3579 for After Final communications.

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-0858.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Ackun Jr.', with a horizontal line underneath.

Jacob K. Ackun Jr.
Primary Examiner
Art Unit 3712

J.A.
July 14, 2003